



Arkansas Broadband Advisory Council

MEETING MINUTES OCTOBER 23, 2007

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Ed Allis
AT&T

Greg Ashcraft
South Arkansas
Telephone Company

Dave Burdick
Pine Bluff Jefferson
County Library
System

Arl Cope
Alliance
Communications

Maryce Cunningham
Suddenlink
Communications

Jim Dailey
Flake & Kelley
Commercial

John Dreher
CenturyTel

George Hopkins, Esq.
Attorney at Law

Len Pitcock
Arkansas Cable
Telecommunications
Association

Wendy Wheeler
Alltel
Communications

James Winningham
Arkansas Insurance
Department

Meeting was called to order by James Winningham at 9:30 a.m.

In attendance:

Ed Allis	Jim Dailey
Greg Ashcraft	John Dreher
Dave Burdick	George Hopkins
Arl Cope	Wendy Wheeler
Maryce Cunningham	James Winningham

Absent: Len Pitcock

Also in attendance:

Sam Walls III, Vice President of Connect Arkansas
Dr. Mark Peterson, University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service
Melinda Kelley, Arkansas Insurance Department

1. Introductions
No new attendees to be introduced.
2. Roll Call
Secretary Maryce Cunningham called the roll.
3. Draft proposed content of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council
(Agenda item taken out of order to allow member departing the meeting early to have an opportunity to discuss.)
 - a. Opening discussion
 - i. It was decided that the report should be no more than three pages in length. It should be easy to read and should be submitted quickly due to the initiatives important need for funding.
 - ii. Jim Dailey suggested putting the body of the report onto ABAC's web site and offering links to more detailed material, such as the numerous press articles collected by Council members.
 - iii. Wendy Wheeler suggested calling the presentation an Executive Summary or Overview, rather than Report. Wendy also submitted a detailed outline, which will be combined with the draft created by James Winningham.
 - b. Content
 - i. Summary – brief overview of the creation of the Council.
 - ii. Potential Arkansas benefits from statewide broadband availability
 - 1) Council mission and objectives.
 - 2) Cite other sources that have suggested benefits, including Connect Arkansas, but make certain that ABAC is identified as a separate entity.

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3. Draft proposed content of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council (continued)

b. Content (continued)

iii. Initial obstacles to statewide broadband

- 1) Lack of funding is currently the dominant obstacle that is keeping Connect Arkansas from launching Phase I of its plan, and lack of funding also limits activities of the ABAC.
- 2) Perception that the state is covered by current broadband sources.
- 3) Lack of appreciation for the impact that broadband can have on the un-served and under-served areas.
- 4) People's aversion to technology.
- 5) Consumer reluctance.

Example: It was asserted that INA volunteered to provide web pages for all Arkansas counties; but that the counties were not interested.

- 6) Defined roles/responsibilities for each entity/organization/partner.
- 7) Quantifying and conveying benefits vs. costs to stakeholders/general public.
- 8) Monetary and infrastructure obstacles to be overcome.
- 9) Current broadband providers need to come to consensus on how much information they will provide about their current market areas and customers.
- 10) Need for a verifiable snapshot or estimate of where broadband is currently available in the state.
- 11) Need for real information, rather than suppositions.
- 12) Companies' suppositions that their current web efforts are sufficient to their needs and capabilities.
- 13) Locating the sources of information that will offer global solutions and sources for suggested policy,
- 14) Adjusting the focus to all areas of the state, not just to areas currently being served.
- 15) Include Council's expectation that all of these obstacles are surmountable and that we will find a way to work with and around them.

iv. Recommendations for overcoming initial obstacles

- 1) Offering examples of other states' initiatives.
- 2) Communicating with public and local communities via newsletter, website, links to every partner, and other sources of linkage.
- 3) Searching for a mixture of solutions that combine the best technical capabilities of several methods of broadband distribution.
- 4) Beginning a dialog with our Federal representatives so that we can help the Federal government help us
- 5) Researching Arizona's recognition of the importance of broadband by declaring it by law as a "critical infrastructure"
- 6) Reviewing information Jim Dailey will supply from the Rural TeleCon '07 conference and exploring of its references and links.

v. Council activities to date

- 1) Brief summary of our meetings.
- 2) Worldwide research for information resulting in a growing library of relevant Articles.
- 3) ABAC members' testimony before the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee Hearing on the State of Broadband in Rural Arkansas.
- 4) Jim Dailey's attendance at the Rural TeleCon '07 conference.

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3. Draft proposed content of initial report to the Governor and Legislative Council (continued)
 - b. Content (continued)
 - vi. Council direction going forward
 - 1) Our mission and what we're planning to do with an expression of urgency.
 - 2) Council's intention to begin to share policy recommendations.
 - 3) A snapshot or good estimate of the current situation can be provided, instead of suggesting that we don't know the extent of the current coverage or offering only suppositions.
 - 4) Focus on availability to all areas of the state, not just to current coverage areas. For example, if a business considers moving into a remote location of the state, there may be an immediate need for broadband to secure that business' entry into the area.
 - 5) Current providers will need to provide coverage information, as possible with non-disclosure policies.
 - 6) Secure government assistance by demonstrating that Arkansas's goal is to:
 - Make broadband universally accessible.
 - Prepare all residents and businesses to take advantage of it through education.
 - Locate of method of putting equipment into the hands of people who do not currently possess it due to lack of ability to purchase.
 - c. Proceeding beyond the outline
 - i. James requested comments from all Council members.
 - ii. First draft to be ready by next meeting.
 - iii. Due to the urgency of the need for monetary assistance for both ABAC and Connect. Arkansas, the report should be completed as quickly as possible.
4. Review minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.
Jim Dailey moved.
Dave Burdick seconded.
5. Connect Arkansas Update
 - a. Sam Wells III reported that Connect Arkansas's first newsletter will be going out this week.
 - b. Representatives of Connect Arkansas will be visiting North Carolina to review that state's broadband model shortly.
 - c. The first Connect Arkansas board meeting was held recently.
 - d. A sample of a non-disclosure agreement has been received.
 - e. Currently Arkansas Capital Corp. is backing the work of Connect Arkansas, but the group needs to receive funding as quickly as possible, and State funding would demonstrate beyond any doubt that the State government leadership is in full support of the statewide broadband effort.
6. Status of Action Items
 - a. Maryce Cunningham has spoken with Terri Glaze of Sen. Pryor's office, and Ms. Glaze has agreed to speak with the Council.
 - i. A video conference call will be set up to be held during the December meeting.
 - ii. Several locations that can provide video conferencing capability were discussed.
 - b. George Hopkins reported on his contacts with the Executive Committee of the Legislative Council. Because their funding is being cut, ABAC should not expect to receive financial support from this group.

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6. Status of Action Items

Maryce Cunningham will contact the Director of the Bureau of Legislative Research as another potential source of support.

- c. James Winningham has contacted INA to create and maintain the ABAC website, but as of this meeting has not received a response. DIS will provide support to obtain the domain name registration.

7. Any Comment by the Public

No comment from the public

8. Other Matters of Business

- a. It was suggested that ABAC meetings be held at a variety of locations so that we can inform these groups of our mission and activities and receive feedback regarding their perceptions of the state's broadband needs. Suggestions supplied by Dr. Mark Peterson include:
 - Arkansas Municipal League
 - Association of Arkansas Counties
 - Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
 - Arkansas Farm Bureau
- b. Maryce Cunningham suggested distributing a press release to all Arkansas newspapers concerning the work of the Council and a list of its members and also inviting the public to attend and participate in meetings.
- c. Jim Dailey will send out information and links he obtained at the Rural TeleCon '07.
- d. Arl Cope spoke about locating new and previously-untapped sources of broadband distribution, such as dark fiber available from and unused by a water company.
- e. Regular meeting day will be the fourth Tuesday of the month. When the fourth Tuesday falls on a holiday, such as this December, the meeting will be held on the third Tuesday.

Meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Jim Dailey moved

John Dreher seconded

Respectfully submitted,

Maryce J. Cunningham
Secretary